Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

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Adoption of the report of the meeting

Report of the Meeting of States Parties

I. Introduction

1. The Final Document of the Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC/CONF.VII/7), in the Decisions and Recommendations section, contained the following decision:

> "5. Reaffirming the utility of the previous intersessional programmes from 2003–2010, the Conference decides to retain previous structures: annual Meetings of States Parties preceded by annual Meetings of Experts.
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> 6. The purpose of the intersessional programme is to discuss, and promote common understanding and effective action on those issues identified for inclusion in the intersessional programme by this Seventh Review Conference.
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> 7. Recognizing the need to balance an ambition to improve the intersessional programme within the constraints — both financial and human resources — facing States Parties, the Conference decides to continue to allocate ten days each year to the intersessional programme.
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> 8. The Conference decides that the following topics shall be Standing Agenda Items, which will be addressed at meetings of both the Meeting of Experts and Meeting of States Parties in every year from 2012–2015:
>
> (a) Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X;
>
> (b) Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention;
>
> (c) Strengthening national implementation.
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> 9. The Conference decides that the following other items will be discussed during the intersessional programme in the years indicated:
>
> (a) How to enable fuller participation in the CBMs (2012 and 2013);

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(b) How to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties (2014 and 2015).

10. The restructured Meetings of Experts will last five days, and Meetings of States Parties five days.

11. The first year's meetings will be chaired by a representative of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States, the second by a representative of the Eastern European Group, the third by a representative of the Western Group, and the fourth by a representative of the Group of the Non-Aligned Movement and Other States. The annual Chair will be supported by two annual vice-chairs, one from each of the other two regional groups.

12. Each Meeting of Experts will prepare for the consideration of the Meeting of States Parties a factual report reflecting its deliberations. This report will reflect work on the three Standing Agenda Items, as well as a report on the other item scheduled for discussion during that year.

13. In addition to the report of the Meeting of Experts, the Meetings of States Parties will also consider — on an annual basis — progress with universalization of the Convention and the annual reports of the Implementation Support Unit. In 2012 and 2013, the Meeting of States Parties will also consider the Meeting of Experts report on CBMs, and in 2014 and 2015, the Meeting of States Parties will consider the Meeting of Experts report on Article VII.

14. All meetings, both of experts and of States Parties, will reach any conclusions or results by consensus.

15. The Eighth Review Conference will consider the work and outcome of these meetings and decide on any further action."

2. By resolution 70/74, adopted without a vote on 7 December 2015, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depositary Governments of the Convention, to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the review conferences and to render the necessary assistance and to provide such services as may be required for the remaining meeting of States Parties during the current intersessional process and for the preparation and conduct of the Eighth Review Conference.

3. The 2015 Meeting of Experts convened in Geneva from 10 to 14 August 2015. At its closing meeting on 14 August 2015, the Meeting of Experts adopted its Report by consensus (BWC/MSP/2015/MX/3).

II. Organization of the Meeting of States Parties

4. In accordance with the decision of the Seventh Review Conference, the 2015 Meeting of States Parties was convened at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 14 to 18 December 2015, under the chairmanship of Mr. Mazlan Muhammad, Ambassador of Malaysia, with Mr. Henk Cor van der Kwast, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament and Mr. György Molnár, Ambassador and Special Representative of the Foreign Minister for Arms Control, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation of Hungary as Vice-chairs.

5. At its first meeting, on 14 December 2015, the Meeting of States Parties adopted its agenda (BWC/MSP/2015/1) and programme of work (BWC/MSP/2015/2) as proposed by

the Chairman. The Meeting also took note of the Report of the Meeting of Experts (BWC/MSP/2015/MX/3). The Chairman drew the attention of delegations to two reports: the report of the Implementation Support Unit (BWC/MSP/2015/3) and a report on universalization activities prepared by the Chairman (BWC/MSP/2015/4).

6. At the same meeting, following a suggestion by the Chairman, the Meeting of States Parties adopted as its rules of procedure, *mutatis mutandis*, the rules of procedure of the Seventh Review Conference, as contained in annex III of the final document of the Review Conference (BWC/CONF.VII/7).

7. Mr. Daniel Feakes, Chief, Implementation Support Unit, served as Secretary of the Meeting of States Parties. Ms. Ngoc Phuong Van Der Blij, Political Affairs Officer, Implementation Support Unit, served as Deputy Secretary.

III. Participation at the Meeting of States Parties

8. 111 States Parties to the Convention participated in the Meeting of States Parties as follows: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Libya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Yemen and Zimbabwe.

9. In addition, three States that had signed the Convention but had not yet ratified it participated in the Meeting of States Parties without taking part in the making of decisions, as provided for in rule 44, paragraph 1, of the rules of procedure: Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

10. Two States, Guinea and Israel, neither parties nor signatories to the Convention, participated in the Meeting of States Parties as observers, in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 2 (a).

11. The United Nations, including the United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and its Group of Experts, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, attended the Meeting of States Parties in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 3.

12. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Arab States, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the World Organization for Animal Health, were granted observer status to participate in the Meeting of States Parties in accordance with rule 44, paragraph 4.

13. Twenty seven non-governmental organizations and research institutes attended the Meeting of States Parties under rule 44, paragraph 5.

14. A list of all participants in the Meeting of States Parties is contained in document BWC/MSP/2014/INF.3.

IV. Work of the Meeting of States Parties

15. In accordance with the programme of work (BWC/MSP/2015/2), the Meeting of States Parties held a general debate in which the following 42 States Parties made statements: Algeria, Australia, Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada on behalf of the JACKSNNZ group, Chile, China, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador , Finland, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of) on behalf of the NAM and Others Group, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Russian Federation, Ukraine, United States of America. Four observer organization(s), the European Union, International Committee of the Red Cross, United Nations Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and G7 Global Partnership also made statements in the general debate. Following the general debate, during an informal session the Meeting heard statements from 15 non-governmental organizations and research institutes.

16. Between 14 and 18 December 2015, the Meeting of States Parties held sessions devoted to each of the standing agenda items on: cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X; review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention; and strengthening national implementation (agenda items 7 to 9); and a session devoted to the biennial item on how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties (agenda item 10). On 18 December, a session was devoted to progress with universalization of the Convention (agenda item 11) and the annual report of the Implementation Support Unit (agenda item 12). On 15 December, the Meeting considered arrangements for the Eighth review Conference and its Preparatory Committee in 2016 (agenda item 13).

17. In the course of its work, the Meeting of States Parties was able to draw on a number of working papers submitted by States Parties, as well as on statements and presentations made by States Parties, international organizations and the Implementation Support Unit, which were circulated in the Meeting.

18. In accordance with the decision of the Seventh Review Conference, and recalling the common understandings reached during the 2003–2005 and 2007–2010 intersessional work programmes and by the Meeting of States Parties in 2012 and 2013, States Parties continued to develop common understandings on each of the three standing agenda items and the biennial item.

A. Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X

19. States Parties recalled their legal obligation to facilitate and their right to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the use of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes and not to hamper the economic and technological development of States Parties.

20. States Parties recalled their agreement on the importance of taking full advantage of the 2012–2015 intersessional process, as well as the other outcomes of the Seventh Review Conference, to strengthen international cooperation and assistance. States Parties recognized the value of elaborating further the existing common understandings related to Article X.

21. States Parties reiterated the value of the submission of clear, specific, and timely national reports on implementation of Article X as agreed at the Seventh Review Conference.

22. States Parties recalled their agreement on the importance of continuing discussions on full and, effective implementation of Article X obligations, including in light of various proposals made by States Parties.

23. To further efforts to address the challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material, for peaceful purposes to their full potential, and possible means of overcoming these, States Parties noted the value of:

(a) enhancing international efforts to bridge the gaps between developed and developing countries, and strengthen international cooperation to ensure all States Parties have access to the benefits of biotechnology, genetic engineering, microbiology and other related areas, in light of the rapid pace of science and technology developments, including, inter alia developments of special relevance to disease surveillance, diagnosis and mitigation as well as advances in enabling technologies;

(b) making efforts to more specifically identify, evaluate and address challenges and overcome obstacles in the implementation of Article X to generate equitable benefits for all States Parties, in particular developing countries;

(c) taking steps to facilitate and ensure timely access to affordable drugs and vaccines and related diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic equipment to affected States, especially in developing countries, as highlighted by the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa in 2014;

(d) continuing national, regional and international efforts to support the full access and exchange for all States Parties, in particular from developed to developing countries, of equipment, materials, scientific and technological information, experiences, lessons-learned, best practices, education, technical knowledge, as well as financial resources in the field of life sciences and related areas intended for peaceful purposes; and

(e) facilitate the participation from developing to developed countries, through ICT tools, of scientific information, lessons learned exchanges and sectorial know-how through a cooperative approach.

24. To further address a range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive, implementation of Article X taking into account all of its provisions, including facilitation of cooperation and assistance, States Parties noted the value of:

(a) avoiding imposing restrictions and/or limitations on transfers of scientific knowledge, technology, equipment and materials for purposes consistent with the objectives and provisions of the Convention;

(b) assisting States Parties in the development of appropriate national systems of health care that can respond effectively to infectious disease outbreaks, including through contributing to the training of human resources, transfer of technologies to help improve national capacities for diagnosis, research, response, mitigation and recovery including means of protection, and promote academic and scientific exchange between national

experts, and in this context welcomed initiatives that aim to promote and coordinate such assistance, upon request and with the consent of the State Parties;

(c) the growing number of scientific publications and the need to promote wider access through reducing barriers, including barriers imposed by the high costs of subscriptions;

(d) sharing relevant information about the opportunities and challenges resulting from scientific advances in the life sciences and in biotechnology, infectious disease outbreaks, healthcare, agriculture and industry, including through papers and expert presentations at BWC meetings;

(e) taking steps to facilitate and ensure that States Parties have full access to the benefits of advances in life sciences, for peaceful purposes including recent advances such as new technologies, the production or development of vaccines, biological production technologies, and equipment and training for appropriate levels of containment laboratories;

(f) facilitating the availability of cost-effective, affordable and quality-assured medicines, vaccines, diagnostics and related equipment and materials for peaceful purposes; and

(g) promoting collaborative research and development, including through exchange of scientists and providing training opportunities in advanced laboratories.

25. To further address ways and means to target and mobilize resources, including financial resources, to address gaps and needs for assistance and cooperation, in particular from developed to developing States Parties, and from international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, States Parties noted the value of:

(a) facilitating the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials, and technologies for peaceful purposes, and recognized that International cooperation under Article X is not limited to financial resources;

(b) States Parties in a position to do so should consider additional contributions to the BWC Sponsorship programme to increase the level of participation in meetings of the BWC and taking into account the high importance of its predictability; and

(c) further utilizing the cooperation and assistance database established in pursuance of the decision of the Seventh Review Conference for targeting resources by States Parties offering assistance and cooperation, in order to meet the need of the States Parties.

26. To further address education, training, exchange and twinning programmes and other means of developing human resources in the biological sciences and technology relevant to the implementation of the Convention, particularly in developing countries, States Parties acknowledged that exchanges in education and training contribute to the development of relevant human resources in the field of biological sciences, and that international cooperation in education and training will help to reduce the gap between the capabilities of States Parties.

27. To further address capacity-building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity, and for detecting, notifying, and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation, States Parties noted that recent lessons learnt from infectious disease outbreaks reinforce the need for a continued and stronger concerted international effort to build countries' capacities, at the request of the recipient State and in accordance with their needs, to effectively mitigate the risk posed to human, animal and plant health by relevant biological agents.

28. To further address coordination of cooperation with other relevant international and regional organizations, and other relevant stakeholders, States Parties recognized that relevant international and regional organizations such as the WHO and the OIE play an important role in disease surveillance, prevention, detection, response, mitigation and recovery and there is therefore merit in coordination and cooperation between States Parties and relevant international organizations in accordance with their respective mandates.

B. Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention

29. States Parties identified certain advances in science and technology that have potential benefits for the Convention and agreed on the need to share information on these developments, including on the improved understanding of, and technologies to investigate:

(a) advances of relevance to agriculture, such as improved biological control methods to combat plant pests and diseases, and approaches to improve food production;

(b) advances and research in biology, biotechnology, bioengineering and biomedical engineering, in particular, developments in enabling technologies including high-throughput systems for sequencing, synthesizing and analyzing DNA, bioinformatics and computational tools and systems biology, host-pathogen interactions for enhanced cooperation and making vaccines, medicines and diagnostics production simpler, faster, cheaper and more efficient in developing countries; and

(c) advances in immunology, and various enabling technologies, including, inter alia, genome editing tools including those derived from bacterial "immune systems", such as CRISPR, as well as those related to continuing progress in synthetic biology.

30. States Parties noted that some of the developments reviewed have the potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention, including: the creation of novel, highly-contagious, virulent pathogens; and programming cells to produce toxins, viruses or other biological materials which could cause harm. States Parties also agreed on the importance of facilitating the fullest possible exchange of relevant technologies where their use is fully consistent with the peaceful object and purpose of the Convention.

31. To further address strengthening national biological risk management, as appropriate, in research and development involving new science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention, States Parties noted that a possible measure may include a comprehensive examination of appropriate oversight criteria, inter alia, reaching common understandings on optimal methods, including appropriate criteria, as required, for assessing risks and benefits, including risks of misuse, and optimal approaches to mitigating risks, identified at BWC meetings. States Parties further noted that measures taken to mitigate biological risk should be proportional to assessed risk and not hamper peaceful activities, including international cooperation.

32. To further address voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct by scientists, academia and industry, States Parties noted the value of considering a template for voluntary codes of conduct for scientists in the fields relevant to the Convention, States Parties also noted the need to bring in a diverse range of expertise from all relevant fields and noted the need to avoid codes of conduct imposing restrictions and/or limitations inconsistent with the Convention.

33. To further address education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology, States Parties recognized that the continuous and accelerating rate of progress in scientific knowledge requires the necessity of deepening a culture of responsible use of this knowledge, which takes into account the object and purpose of the

Convention without undermining peaceful uses. In order to further efforts on education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology. States Parties discussed on the need to share information and knowledge on these developments, including dual-use research of concern.

34. To further address science- and technology-related developments relevant to the activities of multilateral organizations such as the WHO, OIE, FAO, IPPC and OPCW, States Parties noted that the increasing convergence of chemistry and biology underlines the importance of continuing to build and sustain cooperation between the Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention to assist analysis of the potential benefits and risks resulting from advances in converging scientific and technological areas.

35. Recalling the decision of the Seventh Review Conference for the 2015 Meetings to address the topical scientific subject of any advances in production, dispersal and delivery technologies of biological agents and toxins, States Parties noted that advances in such technologies and its implications needs to be discussed further.

36. States Parties recognized the value of continuing discussions on science and technology developments relevant to the Convention in light of various proposals made by States Parties.

37. States Parties noted that among the lessons identified by assessments of the international response to the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa was the need to expand investment in research and development on diagnostics, drugs and vaccines, and also recognize the importance of the accessibility of science and technology developments related to the response of any outbreak.

C. Strengthening national implementation

38. States Parties recalled their legal obligation, in accordance with their constitutional processes, to take any necessary measures to prohibit and prevent the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition, or retention of biological weapons and to prevent their transfer to any recipient whatsoever, directly or indirectly, and not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any State, group of States or international organizations to manufacture or otherwise acquire them.

39. States Parties recalled their agreement to continue to work to strengthen national implementation, taking into account differences in national circumstances and legal and constitutional processes. States Parties noted the value of elaborating further the existing common understandings related to national implementation, including in light of various proposals made by States Parties.

40. To further address ways and means to enhance national implementation, taking into account differences in national circumstances and legal and constitutional processes, sharing best practices and experiences, including the voluntary exchange of information among States Parties on their national implementation, enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions, States Parties noted the value of:

(a) effective and comprehensive national legislation which are consistent with all provisions of the Convention;

(b) preserving the peaceful benefits of life science research whilst preventing activities contrary to the provisions of the Convention

(c) continuous capacity-building;

(d) strengthening domestic biosecurity regulations and capabilities;

(e) effective national export controls in full conformity with all provisions of the Convention;

(f) continuing to work to increase participation in the CBMs, including through a voluntary step-by-step approach seeking to identify impediments and difficulties to participation, as appropriate, as well as by identifying assistance opportunities and packages available to help States Parties participate; and

(g) cross-regional cooperation, through partnership programmes, or by providing the necessary financial resources to States in need.

41. To further address regional and sub-regional cooperation that can assist national implementation of the Convention, States Parties noted the importance of regional and sub-regional cooperation the sharing of experiences and identifying additional ways and means to strengthen national implementation. States Parties noted the value of exchanging best practice with relevant regional and sub-regional organizations and using them, as appropriate and in accordance with their mandates, to promote networking, collaboration and coordination, and capacity-building as well as to support national and local training and human capacity-building. States Parties commended those States Parties which have engaged in such cooperation and noted the value of, where possible, supporting financially or otherwise promoting such cooperation, and agreed to work together to promote awareness of the implementation of the Convention, and to strengthen regional discussions on the intersessional topics and their application.

42. To further address national, regional and international measures to improve laboratory biosafety and biosecurity of biological agents and toxins, States Parties noted the value of, in accordance with national laws and regulations and local conditions, establishing effective and appropriate arrangements for the safety and security of biological agents and toxins. States Parties further noted the value of sharing ideas about how best to manage dual use risks, in light of various proposals made by States Parties, including examining comprehensively appropriate oversight criteria, improving capacity building for biosafety and biosecurity according to their specific situations, raise the level of management and transparency for dual-use bioscience and technology research, establish where appropriate mechanisms to guard against the misuse of bioscience and technology, and raising awareness of research personnel concerning biosafety and biosecurity.

D. How to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties

43. States Parties reiterated that States Parties bear the responsibility for providing assistance, and coordinating with relevant organizations in the case of alleged use of biological or toxin weapons. States Parties reaffirmed the undertaking made by each State Party to provide or support assistance in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations to any State Party which so requests, if the Security Council decides that such State Party has been exposed to danger as a result of a violation of the Convention.

44. Recognizing a need to provide effective and timely assistance under Article VII to the State Party exposed to the danger as a result of violations of the Convention and noting that national capacities and national health systems contribute to international capabilities for response, investigation and mitigation of outbreaks of disease, including those due to alleged use of biological or toxin weapons. States Parties further noted that even where national capacity is strong, further international assistance may be required by the affected State Party.

45. States Parties having considered relevant agreements reached at past review conferences and common understandings identified at previous Meetings of States Parties related to Article VII, reiterated that in view of the humanitarian imperative, pending consideration of a decision by the Security Council, timely emergency assistance could be provided by States Parties, if requested.

46. Recognizing that there are both strong similarities and differences between responses to a deliberate disease and a natural outbreak, States Parties noted:

(a) the importance in both cases of a rapid response, as well as effective communication and coordination;

(b) the value of effective coordination and cooperation with relevant international health and humanitarian organizations, such as WHO, FAO, OIE, IPPC, OCHA and the ICRC, in accordance with their mandates;

(c) that an event relevant to Article VII is more that an animal, plant or public health emergency, and recognizes that there is no institutional mechanism under the Convention to undertake relevant activities;

(d) the importance of understanding of national and regional specificities to ensure rapid engagement with local communities during the response;

(e) the importance of ensuring timely access to affordable drugs and vaccines and related diagnostic tools, preventive and therapeutic equipment to affected States Parties; and

(f) the importance of drawing lessons from the Ebola disease outbreak, including addressing the lack of ready operational capacity and the need for a change in the research and development model to ensure timely, accessible and affordable medical support for affected populations.

47. When considering a mechanism for the provision of assistance relevant to Article VII, States Parties noted the value of various proposals made by States Parties including:

(a) guidelines, and the information that should be included to aid a State Party in submitting a request for assistance;

(b) the request or appeal for assistance should be transmitted in a timely manner to all States Parties and relevant international organizations for coordination and delivery of emergency and humanitarian assistance and support;

(c) guidelines on the levels of response to be adopted by the States Parties, depending on the nature of the disease, the geographical area where the outbreak occurred, and the capabilities and capacities of the public health system of the State and the potential of international effects;

(d) establishing a database containing information on, and an inventory of, the types of assistance that States Parties could provide, as a means to facilitate provision of assistance to ensure timely and adequate response to a situation involving implementation of Art VII;

(e) a database containing publicly available information on means of protection against, and responses to, biological and toxin weapons;

(f) procedures for the provision of means of protection against, and responses to, the use of biological and toxin weapons to the requesting State Part ;

(g) a fund for assistance to affected States Parties;

(h) capacity-building for international regional and sub-regional organizations that have relevant mandates, as appropriate, such as by joint exercises, workshops and training, including by the use of e-learning modules; and

(i) exploring what role if any, the ISU should play within this mechanism and any additional resources for enabling such a role.

48. States Parties noted the value of preparations being made in advance of Article VII being invoked, including, a coordinated government approach to emergency management, addressing the full range of possible implications, establishing clear channels of communication, accessing relevant expert advice, and working to improve effective cooperation between the law enforcement and health sectors.

49. Recognizing that for the implementation of Article VII national preparedness contributes to international capabilities, States Parties noted the value, at the national level, of:

(a) strong detection capabilities, including for infectious disease detections and surveillance;

(b) capacity building for accurate disease mapping, including contact-tracing, social mobilisation capacities, and case investigation;

(c) appropriate command, control and coordination, functions; and

(d) mechanisms to manage offers of assistance, and to mobilize and coordinate the provision of assistance to other countries upon request.

50. States Parties noted that there are differences among States Parties in terms of their level of development, national capabilities and resources, and that these differences affect national and international capabilities and resources to respond effectively to an alleged use of a biological or toxin weapons. States Parties encouraged States Parties in a position to do so to assist other States Parties, upon request, to build relevant capacity.

51. Recalling discussions in 2014 about the importance of assisting other States Parties by, *inter alia,* enhancing relevant capabilities, strengthening human resources, and sharing appropriate and effective practices, States Parties further agreed on the value of collaborating to build relevant national capacity, including:

(a) sharing experiences, expertise, technology and resources to build capacity to protect against biological and toxin weapons;

(b) new methods and novel diagnostic technologies and equipment for detection of and quick response to a disease outbreak;

(c) disease surveillance information and analysis, including data on populations in high-risk and vulnerable situations;

(d) enhancing national capacity including through taking advantage of, inter-alia, the implementation of the International Health Regulations core capacities;

(e) working with relevant international organizations to build national capacity, such as core capacities of public and animal health systems, or those to address toxins, as well as coordination arrangements; and

(f) avoiding duplicating existing efforts and capacity and taking into account the differences in national laws, regulations, and constitutional procedures.

(b) The value of effective coordination and cooperation with relevant international health and humanitarian organizations, such as WHO, FAO, OIE, IPPC, OCHA and the ICRC, in accordance with their mandates;

(c) The importance of social anthropological understanding of cultural norms to ensure rapid engagement with local communities during the response; and

(d) The importance of recognising that, in the case of a deliberate outbreak, response teams could face additional challenges, having to operate in a potentially hostile environment and/or alongside national or international investigations efforts.

30. Recalling past discussions on the implementation of Article VII and national capacity building, States Parties reaffirmed that:

(a) National capacities and national health systems are the first line of defence in case of an outbreak;

(b) Collaborating to build national capacity and preparedness also enhances international capabilities;

(c) Even where national capacity is strong, further international assistance may be required in the case of an outbreak; and

(d) The presence or absence of national capabilities should not be imposed as a precondition for provision or receipt of assistance.

31. Recognizing that for the implementation of Article VII national preparedness contributes to international capabilities, States Parties further agreed on the value, at the national level, of:

(a) Strong detection capabilities, including for disease detections and surveillance;

(b) Accurate disease mapping, including contact-tracing, social mobilisation capacities, and case investigation;

(c) Appropriate command, control and coordination functions, including at a district level;

(d) Mechanisms to manage offers of assistance, and to mobilize and coordinate the provision of assistance to other countries; and

(e) Addressing legal, regulatory, and logistical roadblocks that would prevent or delay the provision and distribution of medical countermeasures or the use of appropriately qualified foreign medical personnel.

32. Recalling discussions in 2014 about the importance of assisting other States Parties by, inter alia, enhancing relevant capabilities, strengthening human resources, and sharing appropriate and effective practices, States Parties further agreed on the value of collaborating to build relevant national capacity, including:

(a) Sharing experiences, expertise, technology and resources to build capacity to protect against biological and toxin weapons, including:

(i) New methods and novel diagnostic technologies and equipment for detection and quick response to a disease outbreak; and

(ii) Disease surveillance information and analysis, including data on vulnerable and high-risk populations.

(b) Enhancing national capacity by supporting the implementation of the International Health Regulations core capacities and the Global Health Security Agenda action package targets;

(c) Working with relevant international organizations to build national capacity, such as core capacities of public and animal health systems, or those to address toxins, as well as command, control and coordination arrangements; and

(d) Avoiding duplicating existing efforts and capacity and taking into account the differences in national laws, regulations, and constitutional procedures.

33. When considering a mechanism for the provision of assistance relevant to Article VII, States Parties agreed on the value of:

(a) Guidelines to aid a State Party in submitting a request for assistance, supplemented, upon request, by advice from the ISU;

(b) Guidelines on the levels of response to be adopted, as depends on the nature of the disease, the geographical area where the outbreak occurred, the status of the public health system of the State and the potential of international effects;

(c) A database containing information on, and an inventory of, the types of assistance that States Parties could provide, such an inventory should:

(i) Be separate from the existing assistance and cooperation database; and established by the ISU in the restricted access section of the website;

(ii) Not be linked with procedures for requesting investigation of alleged use;

(iii) Be easily searchable and accessible to States Parties and able to promptly examine demands in accordance with domestic procedures and/or specific offers for assistance;

(iv) Include agreed procedures for States Parties to seek assistance;

(v) Include offers of assistance made by States Parties, individually or together with other States Parties, as well as relevant international organizations, such as for material, equipment, advice, technology and finance; and

(vi) Include information such as contact points within States Parties and relevant international organizations.

(d) A data bank containing publicly available information on means of protection against, and responses to, biological and toxin weapons;

(e) Procedures, or code of conduct, for the provision, without restrictions, of means of protection against, and responses to, the use of biological and toxin weapons to the requesting State Party, including consideration of what assistance can be requested and in what volumes, who will coordinate the provision of assistance, how it will be sent and how duplication will be avoided, including with assistance being provided by other international organizations;

(f) A fund for assistance to affected States Parties; and

(g) Capacity-building for international regional and sub-regional organizations that have relevant mandates, such as by joint exercises, workshops and training, including by the use of e-learning modules.

34. When considering a mechanism for the provision of assistance relevant to Article VII, States Parties further noted the value of considering:

E. Further steps

52. States Parties further considered that in pursuing the above understandings and actions, States Parties could, according to their respective circumstances and constitutional and legal processes, take into account the considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions made by delegations on the topics under discussion at the Meeting of Experts, as contained in annex I of the report of the Meeting of Experts (BWC/MSP/2015/MX/3), as well as the synthesis of these considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals contained in BWC/MSP/2015/L.1, which is attached to this report as annex I. This annex was not proposed for adoption as an outcome of the Meeting, and therefore was not discussed with that aim. Thus, the annex was not agreed upon and consequently has no status.

53. States Parties are encouraged to continue sharing information at subsequent meetings of the intersessional programme on any actions, measures or other steps that they may have taken on issues under consideration in the intersessional programme, in order to further promote common understanding and effective action and to facilitate the Eighth Review Conference's consideration of the work and outcome of these meetings and its decision on any further action, in accordance with the decision of the Seventh Review Conference (BWC/CONF.VII/7, part III, paragraph 15).

54. The Meeting of States Parties reviewed progress towards obtaining universality for the Convention and considered the report from the Chairman on universalization activities (BWC/MSP/2015/4), as well as reports from States Parties on their activities to promote universalization. The Meeting welcomed the deposit of instruments of accession by Mauritania and Andorra which brought the number of States Parties to the Convention to 173. The States Parties reaffirmed the particular importance of the universality of the Convention and in this regard urged signatory States to ratify the Convention without delay and also urged those States that have not signed the Convention to accede without delay. In this context, the Meeting took note of the reports from States Parties, and called on all States Parties to continue to promote universalization, and to support the universalization activities of the Chairman with support from the Implementation Support Unit, in accordance with the decision of the Seventh Review Conference.

55. The Meeting of States Parties considered the report of the Implementation Support Unit (BWC/MSP/2015/3). The Meeting took note of the report, and expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Unit. The Meeting called on States Parties to continue working closely with the Implementation Support Unit in fulfilling its mandate, in accordance with the decision of the Seventh Review Conference.

56. The Meeting of States Parties considered the arrangements for the Eighth Review Conference in 2016. The Meeting decided that the Review Conference would be held in Geneva from 7 to 25 November 2016. The Meeting also decided that the Preparatory Committee would be held in Geneva as per the following: up to two days on 26 and 27 April 2016 and would resume its work from 8 to 12 August 2016. It was agreed that the Preparatory Committee meeting in April would consider the agenda items on general exchange of views and the organizational aspects of the Review Conference. It was further agreed that the meeting in August would provide an opportunity for States Parties to consider comprehensively all provisions of the Convention. At the conclusion of the meeting in August, the President would present under his own responsibility, for consideration of delegations ahead of the Review Conference, a summary report without prejudice to perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals presented by delegations or that prejudges the final outcome of the Review Conference.

57. The Meeting approved the nomination of the Eastern Group of Mr. György Molnár, Ambassador of Hungary, as President of the Review Conference and chairman of the Preparatory Committee. he Meeting also approved the estimated costs for the Review Conference and the Preparatory Committee as set out in document BWC/MSP/2015/5*.

V. Documentation

58. A list of official documents of the Meeting of States Parties, including the working papers submitted by States Parties, is contained in annex II to this report. All documents on this list are available on the BWC website at http://www.unog.ch/bwc and through the United Nations Official Document System (ODS), at http://documents.un.org.

VI. Conclusion of the Meeting of States Parties

59. At its closing meeting on 18 December 2015, the Meeting of States Parties adopted its report by consensus, as contained in document BWC/MSP/2015/CRP.2, as orally amended, to be issued as document BWC/MSP/2015/6.

Annex I

Synthesis of considerations, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions on the topics under discussion at the Meeting of Experts

This document focuses on new material introduced at the 2015 Meeting of Experts, and does not include concepts that appeared in the 2012, 2013 or 2014 synthesis papers to avoid repetition.

I. Cooperation and assistance, with a particular focus on strengthening cooperation and assistance under Article X

A. Challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, including equipment and material, for peaceful purposes to their full potential, and possible means of overcoming these

1. To strengthen efforts to overcome challenges and obstacles to developing international cooperation, assistance and exchange in the biological sciences and technology, States Parties should:

(a) In the light of new science and technology developments, enhance international efforts to bridge the increasing gaps in the field of biotechnology, genetic engineering, microbiology and other related disciplines between developed and developing countries;

(b) Make efforts to identify and overcome obstacles in the implementation of Article X to generate equitable benefits for States Parties, in particular for developing countries;

(c) Ensure timely access to affordable drugs and vaccines and related diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic equipment to affected people, especially in developing countries, as highlighted by the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa in 2014; and

(d) Support a more full exchange and access between States of equipment, materials, scientific personnel, publications and scientific and technological information, in the field of life sciences and related areas destined for peaceful purposes.

B. A range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of Article X taking into account all of its provisions, including facilitation of cooperation and assistance, including in terms of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for peaceful purposes, and identification of critical gaps and needs in these areas

2. States Parties able to do so, and upon request of the interested parties may implement, among others, the following measures, as a contribution especially to developing countries:

(a) To help create an appropriate national system of health care that can respond effectively to disease outbreaks;

(b) To contribute to the training of necessary human resources to fight outbreaks of diseases;

(c) To transfer technologies to help improve national capacities for diagnosis, research and response to disease outbreaks, including means of protection; and

(d) To promote academic and scientific exchange between national experts related to biosafety.

3. To further address a range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of Article X taking into account all of its provisions, including facilitation of cooperation and assistance, States Parties should:

(a) Continue and increase the use of the database for cooperation and assistance hosted on the website of the ISU to improve the results of the exchange, and strengthen national capacities;

(b) Encourage long-term, sustainable cooperation that meets the needs of the receiving countries;

(c) Promote free access to scientific publications through the reduction of possible barriers imposed by the high costs of subscriptions;

(d) Share relevant information about the opportunities and challenges resulting from scientific advances in the life sciences and in biotechnology, disease outbreaks, biological custody and healthcare; and

(e) Ensure that States Parties have access to the benefits of advances in life sciences, in order to take advantage of recent advances including new technologies, production or development of vaccines, biological production technologies, equipment and training for high-containment laboratories, and taking into account the necessity for developing countries to address challenges related to public health.

C. Ways and means to target and mobilize resources, including financial resources, to address gaps and needs for assistance and cooperation, in particular from developed to developing States Parties, and from international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders

4. To further reinforce efforts to work together to target and mobilize resources, States Parties noted the value of:

(a) Promoting the relevance of the Convention to both signatories and non- State Parties that, rarely, participate in the meetings of the BWC. States Parties should give serious consideration to the extension of support to the developing countries to increase the level of participation in all meetings of the BWC;

(b) Agreeing on regional implementation plans across the world with consent and involvement of States concerned;

(c) Utilizing the cooperation and assistance database established in pursuance of the decision of the 7th review Conference for targeting resources by State Parties offering assistance and cooperation by making concrete offers in areas directly relevant to the Convention.

D. Education, training, exchange and twinning programmes and other means of developing human resources in the biological sciences and technology relevant to the implementation of the Convention, particularly in developing countries

5. States Parties acknowledged that exchanges in education and training are of fundamental importance for the development of human resources in the field of biological sciences.

6. International cooperation in education and training will be able to bridge the gap between the capabilities of developing and developed countries.

E. Capacity-building, through international cooperation, in biosafety and biosecurity, and for detecting, reporting, and responding to outbreaks of infectious disease or biological weapons attacks, including in the areas of preparedness, response, and crisis management and mitigation

7. States Parties noted that recent disease outbreaks reinforce the need for a continued and concerted international effort to build countries' capacities to effectively mitigate the risk posed to global health security by pathogenic microorganisms.

8. While there is a legitimate need for biocontainment facilities worldwide, the inherent dual-use potential of these facilities and related equipment – as well as of the pathogens they contain and the skills developed through hands-on work – merit scrutiny in a world where terrorism and the proliferation of weapons-relevant materials, technologies, and expertise pose genuine threats

F. Coordination of cooperation with other relevant international and regional organizations, and other relevant stakeholders

9. States Parties recognized that relevant international and regional organizations such as WHO and OIE play an important role in disease surveillance, prevention, detection and response and there is therefore merit in coordination of cooperation with them in accordance with their respective mandates.

10. States Parties also noted that the unique role of the BWC, as a Convention which deals with security related issues, needs to be recognized and further efforts should be made for full and effective implementation of Article X within the Convention itself.

II. Review of developments in the field of science and technology related to the Convention

A. Advances in production, dispersal and delivery technologies of biological agents and toxins

11. States Parties identified certain advances in the understanding of production, dispersal and delivery technologies of biological agents and toxins that have potential benefits for the Convention and agreed on the need to share information on these developments, including:

(a) Advances in production technologies, such as:

(i) Using microorganisms to produce novel materials;

(ii) Increasing demand for single-use bioreactor systems in commercial production processes;

(iii) Developments in transgenic animals and plants as a means of producing therapeutics and vaccines;

(iv) Advances in peptide production;

(v) 3-D printing technology, that may have implications for the production of biological agents and toxins in the future; and

(vi) Portable biological containment systems.

(b) Advances in dispersal technologies, such as:

(i) Delivery of drugs and vaccines - such as use of microneedles - may ultimately result in higher vaccination rates and enable self-administration of drugs that would otherwise require visits to a healthcare professional;

(ii) Field trials on the use of unmanned aerial vehicles;

(iii) Techniques for analysis of aerosolised droplets; and

(iv) Biological control measures using antagonistic agents against plant pathogens, including new formulations with improved viability and persistence.

(c) Advances in delivery technologies, such as:

(i) Development of a nano-particle system for needle-free vaccine delivery to the lungs by aerosol or nasal delivery;

(ii) The use of many other nano-materials in drug delivery;

(iii) Nano-material based approaches, that have the potential for delivery of genetic elements, for example in gene therapy;

(iv) DNA origami for the design and fabrication of self-assembled nano-devices;

(v) Increased understanding of the mechanism by which anthrax toxin enters cells; and

(vi) Advances of relevance to agriculture, such as improved biological control methods to combat plant pests and diseases, and approaches to improve production of food components.

12. States Parties, noting that the developments reviewed above could also have the potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention, agreed to:

(a) Consider the establishment of a working group of scientific experts, including experts from academia and industry, to analyze and review the latest scientific advances with potential implications for the Convention;

(b) Continue efforts to promote greater collaboration with the CWC in light of the growing convergence between the fields of chemistry and biology; and

(c) Seek greater clarity on aspects of range of types and quantities of such agents and toxins, whether naturally occurring or altered which potentially could pose a risk to the Convention, for the purpose of reaching common understandings on criteria for assessing risks of relevance to the Convention.

B. New science and technology developments that have potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention

13. States Parties agreed that some of the developments reviewed have the potential for uses contrary to the provisions of the Convention, including:

(a) Developments in production technologies which improve yield, speed, flexibility, cost-effectiveness, portability, availability and safety that could also be applicable for the production of biological or toxin weapons agents;

(b) Improved dispersal and delivery methods which have the potential to be misused for hostile purposes;

(c) The increasing sophistication and worldwide spread of synthetic biology, together with other enabling technologies;

(d) Research that is identified as being of dual-use concern raises the following issues:

(i) The lack of criteria for identifying research as being in contravention of the BWC prevents a timely assessment of the results of the work and hinders efforts to restrict wide access to this dangerous information;

(ii) Gene drives and their potential risks;

(iii) The growing marginalization of the need to possess real scientific information on the internet.

C. New science and technology developments that have potential benefits for the Convention, including those of special relevance to disease surveillance, diagnosis and mitigation

14. States Parties identified certain advances that have potential benefits for the Convention and agreed on the need to share information on these developments, including those of special relevance to disease surveillance, diagnosis and mitigation:

(a) Advances of relevance to agriculture, such as improved biological control methods to combat plant pests and diseases, and approaches to improve production of food components;

(b) The new advances and researches in biology, biotechnology, bioengineering and biomedical engineering, in particular, developments in enabling technologies including high-throughput systems for sequencing, synthesizing and analyzing DNA, bioinformatics and computational tools and systems biology, host-pathogen interactions for enhanced cooperation and making vaccines, medicines and diagnostics production simpler, faster, cheaper and more efficient in developing countries;

(c) The advances in immunology, such as the CRISPR/Cas system to edit, silence and activate genes at any given site in virtually any kind of genome, including human cells.

D. Possible measures for strengthening national biological risk management

15. States Parties identified possible measures for strengthening national biological risk management, as appropriate, in research and development, including:

(a) A comprehensive examination of appropriate oversight criteria, of optimal methods for assessing risks and benefits, and of optimal approaches to mitigating risks identified at BWC meetings;

(b) Introducing additional requirements to regulate dual-use immaterial technology in the form of sensitive know-how and skills that may be misused in the context of biological weapons development;

(c) Developing criteria on whether research applies to the BWC, to serve as a starting point for organizing a system of control or oversight measures by the international community for the purposes of monitoring dual-use research which could risk the development of biological weapons; and

(d) Developing a code of conduct for biosecurity, to help individual researchers in their assessment of risks and benefits.

E. Voluntary codes of conduct and other measures to encourage responsible conduct

16. In order to further promote voluntary codes of conduct and other measures designed to encourage responsible conduct, States Parties should:

(a) Bring in a diverse range of expertise from academia and industry, to assist in identifying and reviewing relevant advances, and in considering their implications for implementation of various aspects of the Convention; and

(b) Avoid subjecting codes of conduct to any restrictions on exchange of scientific discoveries in the field of biology for peaceful purposes

F. Education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology

17. States Parties recognized that, the continuous and accelerating rate of progress in scientific knowledge implies the necessity of deepening a culture of responsible use of this knowledge, which takes into account biological disarmament without undermining peaceful uses.

18. In order to further efforts on education and awareness-raising about risks and benefits of life sciences and biotechnology, States Parties agreed on the need to share information on these developments, including:

(a) Gain of function research; and

(b) Dual-use Research of Concern.

G. Science- and technology-related developments relevant to the activities of multilateral organizations such as the WHO, OIE, FAO, IPPC and OPCW

19. The increasing convergence of chemistry and biology underlines the importance of continuing to build and sustain coordination between the Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention to assist analysis of the potential benefits and risks resulting from advances in scientific and technological areas of mutual interest.

20. The overlap continues to blur even further the boundaries between what constitutes biology and chemistry and the impact that 'convergence' has on the provisions of the two regimes needs to be kept under review to avoid gaps opening.

H. Any other science and technology developments of relevance to the Convention

21. States Parties noted the potential relevance of other science and technology developments, including:

(a) Tacit knowledge, defined as the set of skills and understanding gained only through direct experience, is an important consideration in assessing the risk of biological weapons production and proliferation; and

(b) The lessons identified by assessments of the international response to the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa is the need to expand investment in research and development on diagnostics, drugs and vaccines.

22. States Parties emphasized the need for a structured, systematic and ongoing process for the review of relevant advances, the importance of holding regular reviews of the developments in science and technology related to the Convention, and the following ideas were discussed:

(a) An expert working group on science and technology that can thoroughly review the relevant scientific literature and, through reports and presentations, keep delegations up-to-date regarding the latest scientific advances with potential implications for the Convention;

(b) A technical body under the BWC dedicated to reviewing scientific and technological developments will provide a more robust and comprehensive technical basis on which to base policy decisions and a firmer foundation for the future evolution of the Convention; and

(c) A panel composed of experts nominated by States Parties, addressing scientific and technological developments on a continuing basis through an appropriate mechanism established for this purpose which is led and driven by States Parties to the Convention.

III. Strengthening national implementation

A. Specific measures

23. To further address a range of specific measures for the full and comprehensive implementation of the Convention, especially Articles III and IV, States Parties agreed on the value, depending on national needs and circumstances and in accordance with national laws and regulations, of the following:

(a) Continuing to enact, enforce and review national implementation measures, and to provide comprehensive reports on such activities, in order to provide further reassurance about effective implementation of the Convention, which might include:

(i) Domestic legislation;

(ii) Regulations on the transfers of BWC relevant materials, equipment and information;

(iii) National biosafety, biosecurity measures; and

(iv) Seeking external assistance, including through the BWC Assistance and Cooperation Database, the offer by States Parties which have export licensing measures in place to provide assistance on implementation of export controls for chemical and biological transfers, and regional cooperation.

(b) Recalling that the Seventh Review Conference called for appropriate measures, including effective national export controls, by all States Parties to implement Article III, States Parties noted the importance of such measures in reducing levels of concern and enhancing international exchange of life science-related knowledge, equipment and materials. States Parties recognised that the following points are key elements of an effective national export control system:

(i) Address transfers of tangible and intangible goods;

(ii) Clear and comprehensive laws and regulations, that establish necessary legal authorities and appropriate penalties for violations;

(iii) Procedures and mechanisms for appealing licensing decisions, investigating possible violations, and enforcing rules and penalties;

(iv) A list of items focused on the materials and technologies needed to develop, produce, or stockpile biological weapons. Such lists should be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary;

(v) Controls on technology directly associated with listed items;

(vi) A "catch-all" provision that obligates exporters to seek government permission for an export if they have reason to suspect the export is intended to contribute to the development, production, or stockpiling of biological weapons; and

(vii) Regular outreach to life science researchers and the biotechnology industry concerning these requirements to ensure awareness and compliance.

(c) Strengthening implementation of all provisions of the Convention, including those in Article X.

B. Ways and means to enhance national implementation, sharing best practices and experiences

24. To further reinforce efforts to enhance national implementation and sharing of best practice and experiences, States Parties agreed on the value of:

(a) Effective national legislation, by:

(i) Managing the risks of the misuse of research;

(ii) Continuous capacity-building;

(iii) Domestic biosecurity regulations and capabilities;

(iv) Export controls on sensitive materials;

(v) Reassurance, which can be achieved by: increased transparency and practical demonstrations of continued commitment to the Convention, participation in the system of Confidence-Building Measures, making CBMs returns publicly available; and

(vi) Cross-regional cooperation, through partnership programmes, or by providing the necessary financial resources to States in need.

C. Regional and sub-regional cooperation that can assist national implementation of the Convention

25. States Parties agreed on the value of regional and sub-regional cooperation that can assist national implementation:

(a) Through the strengthening of a global, systematic and long-term approach to the provision of cooperation and assistance; and

(b) Through improved methods that facilitate the effective implementation of the Convention at the national level (as regards the work on Ebola in East African countries and information exchanges).

D. National, regional and international measures to improve laboratory biosafety and security of pathogens and toxins

26. To further efforts to mitigate biological risks, States Parties noted the value of, in accordance with national laws and regulations:

(a) Establishing a regime that seeks the best custody of biological agents and their vectors (biosecurity);

(b) The biosecurity measures directed at the prevention of illicit acts should be designed to:

(i) Dissuade these acts;

(ii) Detect and impede access that is not authorised or the loss or theft of materials and biological agents;

(iii) Rapidly evaluate the events that could have suggested an irregular situation and/or the disruption of the biosecurity measures in the facility and in handling the materials and biological agents in order to permit a swift reaction to mitigate the corresponding effects; and

(iv) Make a provision of the elements that may allow a swift response in the event of a disruption of the biosecurity measures.

(c) Sharing ideas about how best to manage dual use risks, whether those ideas will be implemented or not;

(d) Examining comprehensively appropriate oversight criteria, of optimal methods to assess risks and benefits, and of optimal approaches to mitigating risks identified at BWC meetings;

(e) Improving capacity building for biosafety and security according to their specific situations, to raise their level of management and transparency for dual-use bioscience and technology research, to establish risk assessment and early warning systems for the misuse of bioscience and technology, and to raise awareness of research personnel concerning biosafety and security;

(f) Through the expertise of WHO, supporting projects aimed at promoting biorisk awareness, laboratory biorisk management; and by developing Centres of Excellence, mobilising resources to develop coherent and adequate CBRN policies; and

(g) Establishing regulations/authorizations on Microorganisms and Toxins.

E. Any potential further measures, as appropriate, relevant for implementation of the Convention

27. To further strengthen the implementation of the Convention, States Parties discussed the value of:

(a) Further discussing how best to improve methods of work at meetings;

(b) Creating tools to enable States Parties to demonstrate their compliance;

(c) Identifying new approaches, to enhance national implementation through voluntary exchanges of information, such as the peer review mechanism;

(d) Giving the CBMs a role in the peer review exercise;

(e) An Open-Ended Working Group to elaborate on a basis of consensus appropriate measures and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention;

(f) Reassurance, by demonstrating a willingness to co-operate with other States Parties in resolving alleged breaches (Article V or VI), and to assist other States Parties in the event of a biological incident whether a natural outbreak, accidental release of biological agents, or a deliberate use of biological weapons (Article VII). This could include:

(i) Building an operational capability (i.e. through generating a list of experts) that could be called upon to assist in responding to a biological incident, in the absence of a full-time inspectorate; and

(ii) Extending the UN Secretary General's Mechanism to investigate suspected biological weapons facilities and allegations of use, drawing on experiences with the investigations of chemical weapon use in Syria.

(g) An effective and substantive preparatory process towards the 2016 Review Conference;

(h) Working towards identifying options that could achieve similar objectives to a legally binding protocol to the Convention; and

(i) Initiatives that are cross-regional, spanning various groups, and achieve broad ranging support in key issues such as national implementation are a positive step forwards.

IV. How to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties

28. Recognizing a need to strengthen the international community's capacity to effectively provide assistance related to Article VII and having considered relevant agreements reached at past review conferences and common understandings identified at previous Meetings of States Parties related to Article VII, States Parties agreed on the value of:

(a) The primary responsibility for assisting its population resting with the State Party;

(b) Assistance, or the provision of support, being provided promptly and efficiently and only upon the request of the affected States Party when:

(i) Biological or toxin weapons have been used, or are suspected of being used by any States(s) or other entity against a States Party; and

(ii) A State Party is threatened by actions or activities of any State or other entity that are prohibited for States Parties by Article I;

(c) Preparations being made in advance of Article VII being invoked, including:

(i) A coordinated government approach to emergency management;

(ii) Addressing the full range of possible implications;

(iii) Establishing clear channels of communication;

(iv) Accessing relevant expert advice; and

(v) Working to improve effective cooperation between the law enforcement and health sectors.

(d) Humanitarian assistance in cases of the threat of the use of a biological weapon; and

(e) Emergency human, animal and plant health and humanitarian responses prior to a decision being taken by the Security Council which would formally trigger Article VII, so as to ensure efficient, effective response to an outbreak at the earliest possible point, and ensuring that transition to formal activation of Article VII provisions is seamless and complementary.

29. Recognizing that there are both strong similarities and differences between responses to a deliberate disease outbreak and a natural one, and agreeing on the value of drawing lessons from natural outbreaks such as the 2014 West African Ebola disease outbreak, States Parties noted:

(a) The importance in both cases of a rapid response with clear lines of command and control, as well as effective communication and coordination;

(a) How humanitarian efforts and assistance efforts under Article VII would be coordinated with an investigation into an allegation of use under Article VI of the Convention;

(b) What the role of the ISU would be within this mechanism, and what additional resources would be required to enable it to fulfil this role; and

(c) The potential for the United Nations Secretary-General's Mechanism to be called upon in the event of an international disease outbreak.

35. As regards the provision of assistance under Article VII and recalling the provisions set out in the Convention, States Parties reaffirmed that:

(a) Article VII only applies when there has been a violation of the Convention, and is not concerned with natural outbreaks or other biosafety incidents that are not covered under the framework of the Convention; and

(b) The provision of assistance under Article VII should not be conditional on the action or findings of the United Nations Security Council with respect to the investigation of alleged use, and should be provided promptly on the basis of the request by the affected State.

36. When requesting assistance under Article VII of the Convention:

(a) A State Party should provide the following information:

(i) Name of the State Party;

(ii) National Point of Contact of the State Party;

(iii) Date and place of first reported case, indication if there was a related event, a description of the event, to the extent possible, the date and time, when the alleged event(s) took place and/or became apparent to the requesting State Party and, if possible, the duration of the alleged event(s);

(iv) Severity of the event, number of cases and the number of fatalities, if any;

(v) Symptoms and signs – diagnosis if possible, information on the initial treatment and the preliminary results of the treatment of the disease;

(vi) A description of the area involved;

(vii) All available epidemiological information;

(viii) Actions taken to manage the outbreak;

(ix) International organizations already involved in providing assistance;

(x) States already involved in providing assistance;

(xi) Indications of why the outbreak is considered to be the result of a biological attack;

(xii) Characteristics of the agent involved, if available;

(xiii) Types and scope of assistance required;

(xiv) Indication of any investigations conducted or being conducted;

(xv) Contact details for coordination of assistance if different from National Point of Contact; and

(xvi) Licensing requirements for healthcare personnel and measures to address such requirements.

(b) The application is to be submitted to the UN Secretary-General for forwarding to the UN Security Council as an urgent matter. It should simultaneously be submitted as an urgent matter to one of the Depositories or the ISU, who will share this with all States Parties and inform them of the use of the provisions of Article VII.

Annex II

List of documents

Symbol	*Title*
BWC/MSP/2015/1	Provisional agenda. Submitted by the Chairman
BWC/MSP/2015/2	Provisional programme of work. Submitted by the Chairman
BWC/MSP/2015/3 and Add.1	2015 Report of the Implementation Support. Submitted by the Implementation Support Unit
BWC/MSP/2015/4 and Add.1	Report on universalization activities. Submitted by the Chairperson
BWC/MSP/2015/5*	Estimated costs of the Preparatory Committee and Eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Note by the Secretariat
BWC/MSP/2015/6	Report of the Meeting of the States Parties
BWC/MSP/2015/L.1	Synthesis of consideration, lessons, perspectives, recommendations, conclusions and proposals drawn from the presentations, statements, working papers and interventions on the topics under discussion at the Meeting of Experts. Submitted by the Chairman
BWC/MSP/2015/INF.1 [English only]	Report on Implementation of Article X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
BWC/MSP/2015/INF.2 [English only]	International activities of the Government of Canada related to Article X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention: Update 2015. Submitted by Canada
BWC/MSP/2015/INF.3 [English/French/Spanish only]	List of participants
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.1 [English only]	Strengthening Implementation of Article III of the BTWC. Submitted by India and the United States of America

Symbol	*Title*
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.2 [English only]	Biosafety and biosecurity: today's challenges for politics and science. Report from a seminar held on 25 June 2015 in Vienna. Submitted by Austria
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.3 [English only]	Strengthening the ability to take action: A realistic agenda for the Eighth Review Conference. Submitted by the United States of America
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.4/Rev.1 [English only]	Proposal for inclusion in the final document of the Eighth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. Submitted by Armenia, Belarus, China and the Russian Federation
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.5 [English only]	International Activities of the Global Partnership against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction related to Article X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. Submitted by Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.6/Rev.1 [English only]	Addressing modern threats in the Biological Weapons Convention: Follow-up and recommendations. Submitted by Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Sweden and Switzerland
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.7 and Corr.1 [English only]	International cooperation and assistance of Japan related to Article X of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (2015). Submitted by Japan
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.8[1] [Chinese only]	Establishing a non-proliferation export control regime under the framework of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Submitted by China

[1] An English unofficial translation is annexed after the Chinese text.

Symbol	*Title*
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.9[1] [Chinese only]	Proposal for the development of the template of biological scientist code of conduct under the Biological Weapons Convention. Submitted by China
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.10 [English only]	Reviewing Developments in science and technology: Examples of dedicated processes. Submitted by Switzerland
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.11/Rev.1 [English only]	Providing reassurance on Biological Providing reassurance on Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) implementation. Submitted by Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Japan, Malaysia, Norway, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Thailand
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.12 [English only]	BENELUX BTWC Peer Review – Initial observations. Submitted by Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.13 [English only]	International/national implementation of Article X through transparent and reassurance mechanism. Submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran
BWC/MSP/2015/WP.14 and Corr.1 [English only]	Science and technology advances and the application of "dual use". Submitted by the Islamic Republic of Iran
BWC/MSP/2015/CRP.1 [English only]	Estimated costs of the Preparatory Committee and Eighth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Note by the Secretariat
BWC/MSP/2015/CRP.2 [English only]	Draft Report of the Meeting of States Parties
BWC/MSP/2015/MISC.1 [English/French/Spanish only]	Provisional list of participants